



PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING

August 3, 2005 – 6:00 PM

COUNCIL CHAMBERS

7th Floor

AGENDA

1. CALL TO ORDER
2. ROLL CALL
3. MINUTES: July 20, 2005
4. CORRESPONDENCE RECEIVED:
5. AUDIENCE COMMENTS:
6. COMMISSIONER COMMENTS:
7. POLICY/CODE STUDY SESSION:
 - a. Zoning text amendment to allow town homes in the Commercial Arterial Zone and establish standards promoting walkable communities
8. DELIBERATION/RECOMMENDATION:
9. AUDIENCE COMMENT:
10. COMMISSIONER COMMENTS:
11. ADJOURNMENT:

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, NEIGHBORHOODS, AND STRATEGIC PLANNING DEPARTMENT

M E M O R A N D U M

DATE: July 29, 2005
TO: Planning Commission
FROM: Rebecca Lind, Planning Manager
SUBJECT: **Zoning text amendment to allow town homes in the
Commercial Arterial Zone and establish standards
promoting walkable communities**

ISSUE:

1. What is the purpose of residential development in the Commercial Arterial (CA) zone and should residential uses be given the same priority as commercial uses in these districts?
2. Should the City allow stand alone residential uses within the CA zone in the NE 3rd/4th Corridor, Sunset Corridor, and Puget Corridor?
3. If the City allows residential uses in the CA zone, what types of uses are desired: single-family residential, townhouses, cottages, garden style apartments, mixed use (residential and commercial in one building)?

POLICY DIRECTION

The City Council Planning and Development Committee reviewed this issue at the Committee level and gave the following direction:

- 1) Consider platted stand-alone townhouse development to support an ownership housing product.
- 2) Eliminate stacked flat residential uses unless they are part of a mixed use (in one structure development).
- 3) Consider protection of commercial uses and treat residential uses with a conditional use permit requirement.
- 4) Require commercial and residential uses to be connected to promote an integrated walkable community.

RECOMMENDATION:

Approve the proposed code changes to allow, and set standards for, platted town home development in the NE 4th Street Commercial Arterial zone:

- Amend the purpose of the CA zone under 4-2-020 to acknowledge that limited residential use is appropriate when it is well integrated with surrounding commercial development.
- Amend the use tables at 4-2-060 and 4-2-070 to allow attached and semi-attached housing in the CA zone as an administrative conditional use subject to condition number 18.
- Amend note 18 of the Conditions Associated with Zoning Use Tables under 4-2-080 to prohibit Garden Style Apartments and set the conditions that must be met to be eligible for residential development in the CA zone.
- Amend the development standards for the CA zone at 4-3-120 to allow a 1200 ft minimum lot size for attached residential plats.
- Amend section 4-3-070 on the Northeast Fourth Business District to include development standards to promote walkability and to include development and design standards for residential uses in the CA zone.

BACKGROUND SUMMARY:

The heart of this issue has to do with the City's vision for its commercial districts and specifically those in the Commercial Arterial (CA) zone. Renton's Comprehensive Plan envisions Commercial Corridors as urban districts with pedestrian-oriented amenities that will evolve from the former strip-oriented commercial sites scattered along major arterials throughout the City. Residential use is mentioned as part of a mixed-use development, but the Plan concentrates the goals and policies on traditional commercial uses. The vision focuses on creating opportunities for employment, business growth, providing public amenities, and supplying a wide range of goods and services. If this is the true purpose of the Commercial Corridor, then Renton's current land use regulations are not effectively implementing the intent of the Comprehensive Plan. Development regulations allow stand-alone residential uses, such as garden-style apartments, to compete with commercial uses for prime land in some parts of the CA zone. This has been especially apparent near NE 4th Street where several residential developments have been built in the commercial area.

Prior to the 2004 Comprehensive Plan Update, the NE 3rd/4th, Sunset, and Puget Corridors were mapped as Community and Neighborhood Centers and zoned either Center Suburban or Center Neighborhood. Residential use was allowed along NE 4th Street and in two places along Sunset Boulevard as part of a Bonus Residential Overlay. The overlay provided an incentive for residential development in the centers by providing a density bonus for residential development that met specific site review requirements. Mixed-use residential development was allowed in the area

adjacent to the arterial and stand alone residential uses (including apartments, townhouses, and single family detached homes) were allowed in areas more than 150 feet back. Site review was supposed to ensure quality development, but the guidance provided in the development regulations did not provide a solid standard that could be effectively implemented.

While the Bonus Residential Overlay provided an option for residential development, once built the residential uses did not produce the walkable, well connected, and vibrant commercial district envisioned by the Comprehensive Plan. The commercial areas developed into small, strip shopping areas with surface parking in front of the stores. Residential development included freestanding apartments, townhouse, and small lot single-family uses. No mixed-use residential/commercial projects were built. As a result, during the 2004 update, the Centers designation was eliminated and the strips were designated Commercial Corridors in the Comprehensive Plan and zoned CA.

In attempt to improve the vitality in commercial areas, the Commercial Corridor concept provides for attractive districts through additional land use and site planning requirements. As the regulations now stand, residential development is allowed as a part of mixed-use developments in the CA zone. Stand-alone residential development is allowed within 1,200 feet of the NE 3rd/4th Street, Sunset Boulevard, and Puget Drive Commercial Corridors in the form of attached residential units on lots greater than 5,000 square feet. In other words, rental or condominium uses are allowed, at a maximum density of 20 dwelling units per acre (du/acre), but fee simple town houses, cottages, and single-family homes are prohibited.

While there are three Commercial Corridor areas that allow this type of stand-alone residential use, the NE 3rd/4th Corridor has had the most pressure for residential development. Development of that area slowed during the sewer moratorium instituted in 1989 due to physical capacity limitations. When the moratorium was lifted three and a half years later, landowners were eager to pursue their development options. With the combination of strip-oriented commercial uses and deep lots along NE 4th Street, property owners considered the back portions of their property infeasible for commercial use. Several residential developments were built in the NE 3rd/4th Corridor under the Bonus Residential Overlay, and more are proposed under the current regulations.

There is less immediate pressure to develop residential uses in the Puget Drive and Sunset Corridors because they were never subject to development moratorium. Growth in these Corridors proceeded according to market conditions because land was never withheld from development. Commercial uses predominate and according to buildable lands data, there is only capacity for 22 residential units in the Puget Corridor and 67 units in the Sunset Corridor. However, both Corridors are subject to the same regulations as the NE 4th Commercial Corridor and the potential for stand-alone residential use in the CA zone is the same. What little land exists for commercial expansion could be diverted for residential use.

Given the boom in the housing market, there is the potential for residential uses to fill up the small Commercial Arterial sites that have been specifically set aside to provide commercial activity in growing areas. The Comprehensive Plan states in Policy LU-335 that increased demand for commercial use should be accommodated through the intensification of the existing area and not expansion. If the Commercial Corridors are not to be expanded, it is especially important to preserve the land within them for commercial growth. Additionally, with the removal of the Bonus Residential Overlay, the design guidelines for residential development were also removed. There were never standards in place to address the integration of residential and commercial uses or to create pedestrian connections between uses. Given the lack of development standards and development potential for residential uses like garden-style apartments, allowing even limited residential development in the CA zone undermines the goal of transforming strip commercial into a vibrant Commercial Corridor.

Careful consideration should also be given to the type and amount of housing allowed in the Commercial Corridor. Given the size of the Commercial Corridors, detached single-family homes would require too much land unless placed on very small lots. Garden style apartment development, while limited to 20 du/acre, may be too large in size and scale to effectively blend into a commercial area or transition to single-family neighborhoods. Medium density attached town house or detached cottage development could provide an ideal transition between busy commercial areas and residential zones. These types of housing are conducive to either owned or rented dwelling units and the proximity to the arterial is ideal for transit access. Whatever type of residential use chosen for potential inclusion in the Commercial Corridor, the quantity of housing must be limited to give the opportunity for future commercial development. If stand-alone housing developments were desired for the CA zone, limited town house or cottage developments with adequate design and development standards would be recommended.

If stand-alone residential uses were permitted in the CA zone, the development regulations need to change. Commercial uses must be given priority over residential, which might be accomplished by allowing stand-alone residential projects only through a conditional use permit. Also, it is extremely important to decide on the specific design and development standards needed to ensure compliance with the Comprehensive Plan. New language would be needed to guide the development of a superior residential product that successfully integrates pockets of residential development into the commercial zone. Instead of loose guidelines, development standards must be explicitly enumerated for walkways, landscaping, and connections between commercial and residential areas, fencing, building design, parking, and street layout. Carefully crafted standards would offer developers flexibility in site planning, but hold developers to high degree of quality and to the commitment of building the Commercial Corridor as envisioned.

These standards would need to include measures to ensure creation of a lively, well-connected Commercial Corridor. Site plans should be required to connect residential development with commercial uses through a series of pedestrian pathways, internal streets, and public plazas to provide convenient ways for residents to access goods and services. Attractively landscaped, well-designed, pedestrian scale development could

make the commercial area more inviting and attractive. Pedestrian accessibility and walkability would create a more vibrant commercial district. The mix of residential and commercial uses itself could provide a buffer between walled-off residential development and isolated commercial strips. The greater the number of physical connections between the residential and commercial areas, the stronger the community connections will be between the two areas. If developed according to well-crafted regulations, the pedestrian connections could become a community amenity.

CONCLUSION:

The requirement for residential development opportunities in the Commercial Corridor areas is met by allowing mixed-use developments. Stand-alone residential uses do not presently conform to the Comprehensive Plan because there are inadequate implementing regulations to achieve compliance. Given the housing market boom, there is a need to preserve the CA zone for commercial development, especially in the NE 3rd/4th Corridor where there is pressure for residential development. Allowing stand-alone residential in the form of townhouses combined with a conditional use requirement and specific development standards requiring connection of residential uses to commercial uses addresses City Council policy direction on this issue.

CITY OF RENTON, WASHINGTON

ORDINANCE NO. _____

AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY OF RENTON, WASHINGTON, CORRECTING CHAPTER 4-2, LAND USE DISTRICTS, CHAPTER 4-3, ENVIRONMENTAL REGULATIONS AND SPECIAL DISTRICTS, AND CHAPTER 4-4 DEVELOPMENT STANDARDS OF ORDINANCE NO. 4260 ENTITLED "CODE OF GENERAL ORDINANCES OF THE CITY OF RENTON, WASHINGTON" TO AMEND PROVISIONS FOR RESIDENTIAL USES WITHIN THE COMMERCIAL ARTERIAL ZONE

THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF RENTON, WASHINGTON, DO
ORDAIN AS FOLLOWS:

WHEREAS, The City conducted review of the entire Comprehensive Plan and development regulations of Ordinance 4260, performed analysis of needed revisions based on Growth Management Act compliance and developed a work program to implement needed updates of development regulations, and

WHEREAS, The Residential Density Bonus District was eliminated within the NE 4th Commercial Corridor, and

WHEREAS, The prior Residential Density Bonus District provisions allowed attached residential units without a mix of commercial uses within the same building and platting of residential development greater than 150 feet from the primary arterial within the district, and

WHEREAS, The City desires to re-instate the ability to plat attached unit developments within portions of the NE 4th ~~Business~~Commercial District, and

WHEREAS, The primary purpose of the NE 4th ~~Business~~Commercial District is to provide opportunity for a wide range of commercial uses, however residential uses are allowed as part of the mix of uses in the zone, and

WHEREAS, The City Council finds that

Revisions are needed to the Title IV Development Standards to re-instate stand-alone residential uses in a limited way, and to modify procedures and review criteria for those uses to ensure that development is consistent with the purpose of the Commercial Arterial zone,

NOW, THEREFORE, THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF RENTON, WASHINGTON, DO ORDAIN AS FOLLOWS:

SECTION I. Section 4-2-020 Purpose is amended to read as follows

L. COMMERCIAL ARTERIAL ZONE (CA):

The purpose of the Commercial Arterial Zone (CA) is to provide opportunities for a wide range of commercial uses and to set site development standards that transition the commercial area from “strip commercial” linear business districts to business areas characterized by enhanced site planning, incorporating efficient parking lot design, coordinated access, amenities and boulevard treatment. The CA Zone provides for a wide variety of indoor and outdoor retail sales and services along high-volume traffic corridors. Residential uses are allowed as part of the mix of uses in the zone but limited to locations where stand alone commercial activity is not feasible, as mixed uses integrated with commercial uses either within a building or , in the Northeast Fourth Business Commercial District, where connected to adjacent commercial development through site plan features. The zone includes four designated business districts along mapped corridors with development standards designed to encourage concentrated commercial activity, a focal point of pedestrian activity along the corridor, and visual interest. Designated business districts include: Automall, Sunset Boulevard

~~Corridor~~Business~~Corridor~~Commercial District, Northeast Fourth BusinessCommercial
District Corridor, and the Rainier Avenue BusinessCommercial District~~Corridor~~. The
CA zone is intended to implement the Commercial Corridor Comprehensive Plan
designation.

Interpretation of uses and project review in this zone shall be based on the
purpose statement, objectives and policy direction established in the Commercial
Corridor land use designation, Objectives LU-DDD through LU-UUU, Policies LU-333
through LU-405 or the Employment Area-Valley land use designation, Objectives LU-
AAAA through LU-BBBB, Policies LU-444 through LU-459, and the Community
Design Element of the Comprehensive Plan.

**SECTION II. Section 4-2-080 of Chapter 2, “Conditions Associated with Zoning
Use Tables” is amended to correct note 18.**

18. a. General Requirements: Subject to the density limits of the development
standards for this zone. Residential uses only permitted within a structure containing
retail and/or on-site service uses on the ground floor, except in the Employment Area
Valley or Commercial Corridors as described below. Semi-attached units are not
permitted except in the NE 4th ~~Corridor~~-Business District as described below.

b. Employment Area Valley: Residential uses are not permitted in the
Employment Area Valley.

c. Commercial Corridors:

Attached and semi-attached units, are allowed without ground floor retail within the
building, with an administrative conditional use permit when

- 1) The residential use is located more than 150 ft. away from the NE. 4th Street,
Union Ave, or Duvall in the NE 4th ~~Commercial~~-Business District, as shown on
the Corridors maps in Section 4-2-080,
- 2) A mix of commercial, service and residential uses exist within a 150 foot radius
of the proposed residential use.
- 3) Commercial use of the property is not feasible due to the depth of the property
and lack of adequate commercial frontage or access, or the location of critical

areas and/or critical area buffers separate land within the commercial designation from other commercial uses.

- 4) Residential use will augment the primary purpose of the commercial arterial zone by adding a pedestrian oriented land use that provides a physical connection between residential and commercial uses.
- 5) The use provides a transition between commercial and lower density Residential – 10 and Residential 8 zoned areas and provides a visual, pedestrian and vehicular connection from the R-10 and R-8 zoned areas to the Commercial Arterial zoned areas.
- 6) The design standards in Section 4-3-070 NE 4th ~~Commercial Corridor~~ Business District are met.

SECTION III: Section

Northeast Fourth Business District:

A. PURPOSE:

These regulations establish development standards to implement the Comprehensive Plan Corridor Commercial designation policies for the Northeast Fourth Business District. These regulation guiding redevelopment of the Fourth Corridor from existing strip commercial urban forms into more concentrated urban forms, provide for design guidelines for residential development within the district, enhance the pedestrian environment, make the commercial environment more attractive, improve the City's tax base, and result in a more successful business district.

- B. APPLICABILITY: Northeast Fourth Business District: That area (RMC 4-3-040I) along NE 3rd Street/4th Street from and Monroe Ave NE on the west and to NE 4th Street east of Duvall Ave NE on the east.**

C. DEVELOPMENT STANDARDS

- a. Maximum Front Yard Setback:Maximum front setback of 15 feet from the property line. The 15 ft. setback may be modified to accommodate the NE 3rd/4th Street Bboulevard Iimprovement Pplan. When the 15 foot setback is modified, a 15 foot landscaped buffer shall be required within the enlarged setback. Required parking shall not be located within a modified setback.
- b. Public Plazas:Provision of a public plaza abutting the sidewalk at intersections of NE 4th and Union, Duval and NE 4th, and NE 4th and Bremerton along the arterial of no less than 1,000 sq. ft. with a minimum dimension of 20 feet on one side. A landscape plan shall be required for the

public plaza, showing at a minimum, street trees, decorative paving, pedestrian scaled lighting, and seating.

- c. Future Development Pads:For parcels that are not fully developed, designate appropriate areas, for future pad development to occur in later phases.
- d. Maximum Number of Parking Spaces:The number of parking spaces provided for uses within the corridor designation is limited to the minimum requirement in section 4-4-080F 10 Number of Required Parking Spaces.
- e. Pedestrian Connections:
 - i. Location of Pedestrian connections
 - 1. A minimum of one pedestrian connection shall be provided from the street fronting each building , to the entry or entries of each detached building in addition to sidewalks required in Section 4060969F.
 - 2. A minimum of one pedestrian connection shall be provided from each parking field located on the back and/or side of a building to the entry or entries.
 - 3. One pedestrian connection shall be provided from commercial development to adjacent and abutting Residential R-8, Residential R-10, or Residential R-MF zoned property, and to residential uses within CA zoned property, for each cluster of residential uses connected by an independent street system or walkway system serving adjacent and abutting residential development.
 - ii. Design Standard for internal pedestrian connections
 - 1. A minimum of 5 ft. in width
 - 2. At least one of the following materials shall be used to define the walkway
 - a. pavers, or texture, or composition of the paving, and
 - b. a trellis, or special railing or, bollards and/or other architectural features as approved by the Reviewing Official at either the entry or exit of the walkway.
 - iii. Planting Strip
 - 1. Planting strips required in 406-060.F. shall be located between the road and the required sidewalk Trees. shrubs, groundcovers and perennial planting are required components of landscaping.
- f. Design Standards for Residential Uses

Site Design: The site plan shall include design elements that support a quality mixed use commercial/residential use district. The following minimum standards shall be addressed, however the Reviewing Official may require additional elements consistent with site plan review criteria when determined necessary to integrate commercial and residential uses within this district.

1. Residential development shall be connected with the adjacent commercial development using a minimum of two of the following connecting features
 - a. A public or private road that provides, in addition to the requirements of 4-6-060c., a planting strip of 3 feet wide on both sides of the street incorporating a mix of trees, shrubs and groundcover and remains open to public access., or
 - b. Yards with a minimum 15 foot landscape area and with pedestrian access at a minimum of one location. Design standards shall be consistent with Section XXX Design Standards for internal connectors, or
 - c. A public plaza of less than 1,000 sq. ft. with a minimum dimension of 20 feet on one side. A landscape plan shall be required for the public plaza, showing at a minimum, street trees, decorative paving, pedestrian scaled lighting, and seating and incorporating a mix of trees, shrubs and groundcover along the area of the abutting uses.

3. Any walling or fencing shall use materials used in the architectural treatment of the dwellings. In addition, where fencing occurs between residential and commercial uses a minimum of one pedestrian access at least one point shall be provided consistent with Section XXX . Bollards or other decorative features may be provided at the pedestrian only access points between the commercial and residential areas within the CA zoned area. Chains across access points are prohibited.

i. Street Grid:The project shall use a modified street grid system where residential buildings are oriented to a street. Where no public streets exist, a private street grid system within the project shall be provided. No hammerhead turn arounds or cul-de sacs are allowed. To meet the intent of Section 4-6-060 G, Dead End Streets, fire sprinklers shall be required as determined appropriate by the Reviewing Official. Emergency fire access shall be provided through public streets or private easements connecting to

the adjacent commercial or residential area. Bollards or other decorative features may be provided at the pedestrian access points between the commercial and residential areas within the CA zoned area. Chains across vehicular or pedestrian access points are prohibited.

ii. A minimum of one pedestrian connection is required from the site to adjacent and abutting R-10 and R-8 zoned property on each side of a property where adjacent and abutting residential zoning occurs, and to each side of a property or development abutting or adjacent to commercial uses within a 150 foot radius.

iii. Residential Building Size A maximum of 4 consecutively attached units shall be allowed.

v. Minimum Land Area: A minimum 1,200 sq.ft. land area per dwelling unit is required. Each dwelling shall have a private useable outdoor space (i.e. deck, yard, patio) of at least 250 ft². Each unit shall address the public street, private street or court with have a private residential entry on the front façade of the structure designed to provide individual ground floor connection to the outside.

vi. Building Design Standards: Distinctive building design shall be provided with a superior level of quality for materials, details and window placement consistent with the Urban Center Design Guidelines District B. . A consistent visual identity shall be applied to all sides of buildings that can be seen by the general public. Buildings should illustrate residential massing with low-pitched grade roofs, dormer windows, etc. Variation or modulation of vertical and horizontal facades is required at a minimum of 2 ft. at an interval of a minimum of 40 ft on the building face to reduce the over all bulk of the building and add interest and quality. Facades may be articulated with bays, terraces, balconies, awnings, stoops, recessed openings, etc. Large “boxes” without articulation are not allowed. No parapet or roofline shall exceed ½ of the length of the building facade without a change in elevation. Building entries should be the most prominent feature of the façade, emphasized through use of materials and architectural detail such as towers, projections ,varied roofs, trellis work, pergolas or covered entryways.

vi. Parking: Parking must be within an enclosed structure located to the rear of the primary structure or in a detached garage with rear access. If this cannot be accomplished due to physical constraints of the site then garages shall be designed to have a

minimum impact on streetscape appearance and function through the use of shared drives, architectural detailing or façade design. Garage structures shall not open directly onto a principal arterial or street. The required .25 guest spaces per attached residential unit may be surface parking. Parking lots shall be oriented to minimize their visual impact on the site and designed so the size and landscaping support the residential character of the developments in contrast to adjacent commercial areas. No more than 6 stalls may be consecutively clustered without an intervening landscaped area of a minimum of 5 ft. in width by the length of the stall. Surface parking not allowed within the first 30ft. on any street frontage.